

Good Morning

EXHIBIT 10  
DATE 1-27-09  
HB 2

Madam Chairman, members of the committee

Thank you for allowing us to testify today about our programs and how your decisions have helped make our programs better.

I am Nancy Gibson, Director of the Belmont Senior Center in Butte.

I come today wearing two hats, the first as a member of the Adult Protective Team in Butte. I have a love hate relationship with this meeting which I attend monthly. The love comes from knowing the Team has come together for the betterment of the elders living in our community, the hate and depression comes as I walk out of that meeting wondering how on earth fellow human beings can treat each other so bad. And yet the employees of our Adult Protection Agencies walk into these situations everyday. We have one full time employee in Butte; I wonder how she works without felling overwhelmed, burning out and continuing to respond in a timely manner to all our calls. The good news for Butte is we are slated for another Full Time Employee. This is very good news because our Adult Protection Services employee is responding to too many hard cases for one person. Please remember our community when you are setting the budget to care for those who are abused .

Everyone in the state knows the demographics of our community: blue collar, living on a fixed income and if you are elderly not wanting to leave because you have lived there all your life, but there are no jobs for your children. Therefore you are left alone while your children move to another town and sometimes-another state. Who will look after you? Because of these factors there have been a number of very ugly cases of adult abuse and exportation in our community. Therefore, using state monies, under the contingency fund, Adult Protective Services has asked us to form a guardianship committee to help those elderly who have no family in the area but need someone to watch out for them. This is not an easy job, and at times it is hard to find people who will take care of these elderly citizens who need someone to watch over them. We ask that these contingency funds continue to reach our communities so the elderly are not forgotten.

My second hat is the Director of the Belmont Senior Center.

I have been at the Belmont for eight years. During these eight years we have watched the Belmont change direction not because we have led it that way but out of need. I have included a list of all our services, and I want to thank you for helping us create these services by continuing to fund senior centers at a level that has taken us a new level. We have gone from a center whose focus is mainly meals, to a center that serves many needs of our seniors. We are an aging state this is clear, but the seniors who will come to the seniors center in the future are active, they will not come everyday as was the case eight years ago but they will come seeking information and services in addition to meals. That is why the Belmont has a full time social worker and has started a Home Care Program. It is because of the one time money that you allowed us to be more for our seniors; we ask that you find a way to make the one time money a permanent part of our budget. Do not sent us backwards to a center with one focus let us continue to step into the twenty first century with services that our seniors need and are looking for.

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## **State Planning Meeting w/Legislature – 1/27/09**

Thank you for the opportunity to introduce you to our "Home Care Management" program for Seniors.

**\*\*The Belmont Senior Center in Butte was one of 4 recipients of the Alzheimer's Disease Demonstration Grant in April 2006.**

We were awarded \$129,764.00 to provide respite care giving services in 6 counties ~ Silver Bow, Deer Lodge, Granite, Powell, Madison, and Beaverhead.

The grant had a lifespan of 36 months, which ended June 1, 2008. The success of this program clearly demonstrated that there was an enormous need for in home care services in our area. Butte Silver Bow has one of the highest populations of seniors in our state.

After the first year of our program we had provided over 1,500 hours of service, averaging 127 hours per month. Nine months later, we had provided over 5,000 hours of service, averaging 605 hours a month. Our clients had more than doubled by 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2<sup>nd</sup> year and the units of service had more than tripled. Clearly, there was a great need for this program.

We petitioned for, but we not awarded an extension on the grant. Therefore the cost share portion (based on income of the client) was no longer an option after June 2008.

**\*\*We thought the program would dramatically decrease because of the end of the cost share, but not so. In fact, it has continued to grow despite the fact we do no formal advertising.**

**For the services of the Belmont Home Care Employees we charge \$13.00 per hour.** These trained caregivers provide in home care / respite / senior companion services / or home chore to seniors in need.

**The local Agencies currently charge \$19.00 to \$20.00** (Easter Seals, Aplus, Nightingale) These agencies are necessary when a client becomes a higher level of care and we do work with and refer to them to continue to allow these seniors to stay safely in their own home. With this cooperation, it still saves the seniors money.

In the 7 months since the grant ended we have billed out services in the amount of over \$64,000, which translates into almost 5000 hours of service, and an average of 703 hours per month. (See document). We continue to have an average of 2-3 inquiries per week and have added 12 clients to our program since this report. However, all of the monies brought in by this program are used to pay our employees and the cost of workman's compensation, liability insurance and taxes. None of this money goes to administration for this program. **In order to keep this service, it is vital that we have the funding for administrative costs.**

Our reputation at the Belmont Senior Center and the trustworthiness and commitment of our staff has been it's own best communicator within our community and continues to bring us referrals from our citizens, their families outside of our area and the medical and professional community.

The Belmont Home Care Program is a vital link in the chain of life's stages. People become caregivers by necessity, not choice. With caregiver respite, we can buy them time to keep their loved one in their own home, safely as well as taking better care of themselves. It may get to the stage where the care becomes so complex they have no choice but to move their loved one to a nursing home; but many times they can continue to care for their family at home with additional assistance from our programs in cooperation with others such as Hospice until the end of life.

- 1) Inquiries regarding Home Care often are the 1<sup>ST</sup> step to becoming aware of other programs and an opportunity to introduce clients to these services like (M.O.W, Visiting Nurses, Support Group, education and the Lifeline System.
- 2) The flexibility of our program is appealing. Our clients are not cut from cookie cutters who need the same assistance at set time. Adult Day Care and Assisted Living Respite may not be able to guarantee availability when needed. With our program, they get to know their individual caregiver personally and trust them.

Here are some Personal examples of clients we have helped:

- 1) The family lives long distance; Mom takes care of Dad. Our caregiver comes in 1x per wk for 2 hrs to ck on M&D and do light H/K. The personal Caregiver is aware of issues that could be problematic and alerts us of them; we in turn let family know so they can intervene. (Hawkes)
- 2) Hospital releases family member before she is up to taking on the responsibilities she previously had as a main caregiver. This makes the scenario of 2 individuals who need assistance. This adds to the stress on the main caregiver due to the fact she is less able to do the tasks she did before. Our Caregiver hours were increased; both were able to stay home. (Smiths)
- 3) Respite care for the family caregiver enables clients to stay at home safely. Saves \$ even w/o cost share. Both parents were in need of assistance, one with alzheimers disease. Caregiver provides respite for the family member who provides all the care for Mom & Dad. M & D do well in home environment, but need great deal of supervision. Respite caregiver comes 2x per day for several hrs to assist and give daughter a break. At 1<sup>st</sup> assessment – more concerned about daughter. Now...she is much more able to deal and is thrilled with program. (Stosich)

- 4) Mr. R. has invalid wife – takes impeccable care of her. 1x per week (3 hrs) wants to take disabled daughter (can't drive) grocery shopping. Now has peace of mind that his wife is being looked after & is safe while he is away. He was also able to attend grandson's wedding with family while caregiver stay his wife.

**Additional funding is vital to continue to provide these essential services to pay for the administration of this program. Homecare Management requires maintaining and monitoring good staff as well as continued training, home visits and assessments to insure the credibility of our program and to take care of this growing need for our seniors and their families. .**

**Wont' you please consider the funding we need to continue this very important Senior Program? Thank you very much.**